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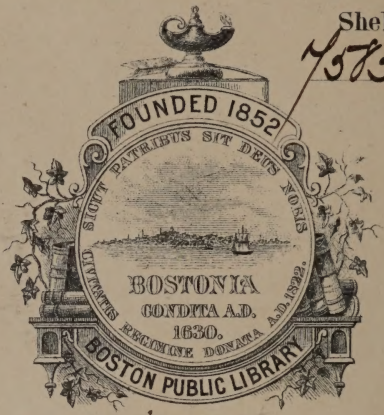

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The Temperance Cause.

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A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

BOSTON

Young Men's Total Abstinence Society,

ON SUNDAY EVENING,

NOVEMBER 8, 1846.

BY EZRA S. GANNETT,

MINISTER OF THE FEDERAL STREET CHURCH.

THIRD EDITION.

BOSTON:

WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS,

No. 118 Washington Street.

1846.

Mrs. Thomas M. Brewer

April 17, 1893

ANDREWS AND PRENTISS, PRINTERS,
11 DEVONSHIRE STREET.

BOSTON, Nov. 18, 1846.

REV. SIR:—

AT a regular meeting of the Boston Young Men's Total Abstinence Society, held at Samaritan Hall, on Monday Evening last, it was unanimously voted, "that the thanks of this Society be presented to Rev. Ezra S. Gannett, D. D., for his able and eloquent Address of the 8th inst., and that a copy be requested for publication."

In performing the pleasant duty assigned us, of communicating to you the above vote, we may be permitted to express our firm conviction that the publication of your Address would be highly beneficial to the cause of Temperance and good morals in this community. We therefore earnestly hope that it will be your pleasure to comply with our request.

With sentiments of the highest respect, we are, Sir,

Your obedient servants,

JOSEPH H. ALLEN,
JAMES M. LINCOLN,
MOSES SPRAGUE,
} *Committee.*

REV. E. S. GANNETT, D. D.

BOSTON, Nov. 23, 1846.

GENTLEMEN:—

I THANK the members of the Young Men's Total Abstinence Society for the favorable opinion they have expressed of the discourse I delivered at their request, and submit the manuscript to their disposal.

I beg you to accept my acknowledgments for the terms in which you have communicated the vote of the society, and believe me

Your friend and servant,

EZRA S. GANNETT.

Messrs. J. H. ALLEN,
J. M. LINCOLN,
M. SPRAGUE,
} *Committee.*

DISCOURSE.

2 Chronicles xix. 11.

DEAL COURAGEOUSLY, AND THE LORD SHALL BE WITH THE GOOD.

The present position of the Temperance Cause is such as should attract to it the attention of every good man, and of every one who feels an interest in the condition or tendencies of society. A few years since a vast change seemed to have been effected in the habits of the people. The power of a vice which had reigned over all classes was broken, and while many of its victims secured an escape from its control, others became aware of the danger to which they were exposed, and placed themselves under the restraint of a well principled self-denial. The shout of exultation went through the country, and spread itself not only over the mountains, but across the ocean, and was sent back from the Old World in a response of moral sympathy. "The temperance reform" had become one of the phrases of the day, and the change which it denoted was continually adduced as an encouragement to those who were engaged in enterprises of Christian philanthropy. A different state of things now presents itself to our notice. A reaction has commenced. Reluctant as we may be to confess this, we are no longer able to deny it. The tendency, both in the city and in the country, is towards an increase of intemperance. Intoxicated persons may often be seen in our streets, — a sight which three years ago was comparatively rare. And what is yet worse as a sign of the times, many who once took part in carrying on the good work have ceased to

be its active supporters; while a general distrust appears to prevail in regard to the efficacy of the Temperance Reformation.

This is not the time to look on in despair or with unconcern. On the contrary, it is an hour which calls for a most earnest consideration of the true methods of banishing an evil which once hung over the land like a portentous cloud, and the return of which should be more dreaded than famine or pestilence. Let all good and wise men, all young and old men, all mothers and all maidens, all who bestow any thought on the present or entertain any hope for the future, enlist themselves among the number of those whose watchword is — "An end to intemperance." Let there be one common, strong, and unquenchable purpose to extirpate a vice which sullies the glory, weakens the strength, debases the character and endangers the existence of the Republic.

It is important that we should ascertain, if possible, the causes of the reaction which has taken place. But it is yet more needful to convert the indifference on the subject which so widely prevails into an inquisitive and active concern. This is a subject on which indifference should be considered a crime against society, and a sin against one's own soul. Men have no right to fold their arms or shut their eyes, — quietly to dismiss the matter with the remark that it is encompassed with so many difficulties that it is useless even to inquire what can be done, — or resolutely to place themselves in opposition to every appeal in behalf of perishing thousands or exposed millions, on the ground of higher or more practical claims on their attention. In the name of reason, what higher claim can be advanced, or what that touches more directly on the interests of humanity — what that affects those interests more deeply or more fatally — than a vice which destroys character and hope, happiness and influence, all that a man has and all that he is, making him a beggar and a brute, while it renders society a stagnant pool of corruption? Has not enough been said of the terrible effects of intemperance? Have not facts enough been collected, and spread again before the public, — facts that might awaken the sensibility of the most stupid? Is it necessary to go over the detail of miseries which come from this one prolific source? Must we still describe the degradation of him who gives himself to strong drink, the grief and wretchedness which he brings on his family, the expense which is created of which the public must bear the charge, the ruin of good morals

which must follow the increase of this vice, or the peril into which it brings free institutions? Is there any need of description where the facts speak for themselves? Does any one doubt that the drunkard is in the way to hell; or that moderate drinking is the way to shameless drunkenness? Do we need that the spectacles of heart-broken wives, ragged and vicious children, homes in comparison with which a prison or an alms-house is a paradise, scenes of strife in which brutal passions efface all that is manly or tender, feeble struggles which end only in deeper debasement, ineffectual agonies of remorse — do we need that these things should be unfolded to our view? Why, they may be witnessed in every street, and have been told of till the tongue of eloquence has grown weary and the heart of compassion sick of the recital. Yet repeat the sad story. Depict the reality. Uncover the kennels of sin. Proclaim the statistics of pauperism and crime. Do everything to enlighten the public mind and rouse the conscience of the inattentive. Only let no one say that this is a subject which lies on one side of his business or his curiosity. His curiosity, — his moral curiosity, if I may use the expression, — should be awake; for, as a Christian, a citizen, and a man, he has much at stake in the solution of the questions which arise out of this subject. No difficulties with which it may be surrounded should prevent a candid and diligent examination of the great points of duty which it involves.

This, then, is our first position, impregnable as a mountain fortress: — the Temperance Cause deserves the attention of all wise citizens, all Christian men. It is a good cause. It is a great cause. To neglect it is to overlook the largest source of expense, crime, and wretchedness with which society is burthened. Of expense hear what has just been published in an address sent forth to the British public by the Convention lately held in London. "It has been proved by parliamentary evidence sifted, examined, and scrutinized, but never yet confuted or denied, that the actual expenditure of money in Great Britain alone, exclusive of all her colonies, in the mere purchase of intoxicating drinks, exceeds fifty millions sterling — a greater sum than the whole revenue of the kingdom from every available source." Fifty millions sterling, or two hundred and fifty millions of dollars! Of crime remember what has been shown by the records of our courts of justice and the confession of the inmates of our prisons, — that three-fourths of all the

violations of law which are known to occur, arise from the use of intoxicating liquor. Of wretchedness let the scenes of woe which sicken the heart in a description that falls far below the reality, be the mournful and undeniable proof. There is but one evil which man has ever invented or under which he has ever suffered, that equals this in the amount of injury which it inflicts on all within its influence, and that is war, the most tremendous curse that God in the inscrutable wisdom of his Providence has permitted to visit our earth. But war, in our times, comes after intervals of peace, and the moral sense of the civilized world has already determined that when it comes its duration shall be brief; while intemperance is a perpetual desolation, whose ravages extend throughout the length and breadth of the land. Again, therefore, I say that it is a subject on which every one should bestow serious and anxious attention.

That mistakes have been committed by those who have taken a part in the direction of the Temperance reform, must be admitted. Disastrous errors have marked its course. Much has occurred to dishearten its friends, — much that shows the need of discretion as well as of activity, the importance of a clear head not less than a warm heart or a wakeful conscience. But shall such misconception of the best methods of proceeding deter us from every attempt to save the people from destruction? What sense,—I will not ask what charity, — what sense is there in withholding our coöperation from a needful work, because others have not discovered the proper way of carrying it on? No enterprise that was ever undertaken by mortal men could have been successfully concluded, if this had been adopted as the rule of judgment. Only a few months since, the merchants of New York were urged to put their shoulder to an undertaking which promised to bring a large amount of business to their city. It was said that there had been mismanagement of its concerns, and much discouragement had in consequence fallen upon the whole project. But they wisely judged that this was not a sufficient reason for refusing to afford assistance to a scheme which, if judiciously conducted, must result in advantage to their whole community. Yet this was a case in which only an increase of wealth and public convenience was anticipated. How much greater would be the force of the principle, when the salvation of the community from a frightful evil impending over their heads should call forth their energies of self-defence! If the waves of our beautiful bay were washing off the

foundations of our city, and every eye could see that our wharves were undermined, our warehouses tottering, our streets sinking, do you think that our citizens would look on without effort or anxiety, and to every appeal that might be addressed to them would answer that so many foolish attempts had been made in former years to arrest the progress of the evil, and so much time and money wasted, that they must decline engaging in any effort to erect a barrier which might prevent the city from becoming a mass of ruins? Self-respect and self-interest would unite in forbidding such a reply to be given. How then can we, consistently with self-interest or self-respect, take just this course when we see the foundations of the social order weakened, the good habits of the people trembling to their fall, and the very ways of life on which we walk yielding beneath our feet? No, no. The extravagances or the failures which have marked the history of a moral enterprise, the disregard of sound judgment or the violation of good taste which may have been shown by its advocates, afford no justification of that apathy which waits till the best men and the best methods appear. On the contrary they furnish a reason, and a conclusive reason, why every one should add the quickness of his ingenuity to the discovering, and the weight of his example to the applying, of the proper remedies for evils which ought neither to be tolerated nor to be deemed remediless. Despair in such a case is treason towards man, and atheism towards God. It is the child of unbelief, and the nurse of inhumanity.

What we should do is, clearly, to avoid the errors which seem to us to have been obstacles in the way of that reform to which our attention is directed. Some of the mistakes which may be charged upon the prominent friends of Temperance are manifest, and are doubtless among the causes of that reaction to which I have alluded. Without proposing to consider them in full, it may not be foreign from our present purpose to offer a few remarks on one or two of the most obvious and efficient of these causes.

The first which I should select is the unhappy difference that has arisen among the promoters of this reform in regard to the use of legal or moral means for its advancement. A strife has sprung up, as mischievous in its effects as it is absurd in its character. One party, relying only on "moral suasion," repudiates and deprecates a resort to law. Another party, maintaining the insuffi-

ciency of persuasion addressed only to the conscience and heart, insists on bringing the strong arm of the law in aid of more gentle appliances. Now, paradoxical as the remark may appear, it may be that both are in part right, and each in part wrong. Circumstances may arise, in which legal measures alone will be effectual, and yet it be best in general to lean on other modes of influence. But suppose that one or the other is entirely wrong, they need not throw away their strength in contention. It is all needed for the work which they have taken up together. I have been pained in attending Temperance meetings to observe how much time was spent by one and another speaker in arguing against the use of methods which he and his audience disapproved, or in disclaiming any sympathy with those who had conscientiously adopted such methods. This is not a question which must be decided before any efficient measures can be taken for dislodging the evil from its strong-holds. It may remain an open question for years to come. It may never be decided. What then? Must all action cease, and alienation take the place of confidence and coöperation? It is not a vital question — that is clear. It is not such a question as has separated "Young Ireland" from the Repeal Movement under O'Connell. There a resort to physical force would be a renunciation of the principle which lies at the bottom of the enterprise, the principle that a great political change is to be brought about without violence. With this principle that movement began, and to this principle it must be faithful, or forfeit its title to the confidence of thousands who have given it their support. But the Temperance reform did not begin with a denial of any particular mode of operation. It had its origin in a dim but painful perception of the exigences of the time, and the clearness and breadth of vision which its proper management requires increased with the thought that was bestowed on the subject. What if all its friends do not yet see "eye to eye?" This certainly should not surprise us. And least of all, should it estrange those from one another who have a common cause at heart. I do not wish now to incline to either one or the other side of this question. Much may be said on both sides. But it is folly beyond what is often seen, to squander in altercation and reproach any part of the energies which should be turned against the gigantic evil that has called them into exercise. Let those who trust to moral suasion bring out all its strength, and

prove how much it is capable of effecting. And let those who deem this an insufficient instrumentality, employ the engines of coercion. Let each party work in its own way. Why should there be any collision, or any jealousy between them? If two neighbors were interested in expelling a nuisance from their respective premises but could not agree upon the manner in which it should be done, would they therefore suffer the evil to increase while they disputed and defamed one another; or would each take his own course, and let the result show which had the correct view of the matter? Entire confidence in the integrity of each other's purposes, with as much coöperation as can be had under such a difference of opinion, is what they who adopt opposite views on this subject should faithfully maintain.

A second unpleasant feature in the recent history of the Temperance movement is the apparent, if not real attempt to place it in opposition to the religious character of the period. A similar tendency has marked much of the philanthropic action of the day. Philanthropy and religion are either divorced from one another, or what is nearly as bad, philanthropy is made to represent the whole of religion. Here is a theoretical absurdity, and a practical delusion. Philanthropy is a part of religion, not the whole. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength;" it is the second, which says "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And "on these two commandments," says our Lord, — not on the second alone, nor on the second as taking the place of the first, — "hang all the law and the prophets" — all the instructions of duty and all the hopes of heaven. Moreover, by asserting the claims of benevolence as more imperative or more immediate than those of piety, we repel from our side all who would be glad to unite with us in elevating the neglected or debased to a better moral condition, but who believe that the only sure basis of philanthropic action is faith in God, and the only safe guide in philanthropic endeavors is Jesus Christ, who preached his Gospel to the poor and closed his life of benevolence by a death of self-sacrifice. This, I conceive, is a correct belief, and wherever it is discarded, philanthropy will be partial, diseased and ephemeral. The religious element is the life of beneficent action. Christian faith alone can give success to any wide-spread movement for the regeneration, or even for the im-

provement of society. The world did not know what philanthropy was till Christ came, and now to try to walk except in the light of his teaching is like going back to the shades of Heathenism. Instability and disappointment will be sure to mark any such attempt.

It may be thought that I am contending against a spectre which my own mind has raised up, rather than against any real form of error or danger. But are there not many signs of the tendency to which I refer? Is not language common now, which must shock the sensibilities of every religious mind? The other day I took up a paper, with the ostentatious title of the "Regenerator," published in one of our Western States, in which the editor, speaking of an Eastern man who had written in behalf of the prisoners in our jails, exclaims — "Our brother is becoming a philosopher, — a philanthropist. Patriotism and partyism — all sectism, he has out-grown. Religion he is out-growing. It remains resting but lightly on him." So then, when a man becomes a philosopher and a philanthropist, he outgrows religion! I will not appeal to your sympathies by asking if this kind of discourse be not mournful. I say it is false and full of mischief. It is tearing up virtue by the roots, and under the name of freedom from superstitious associations, leaving the heart to a cold and bitter selfishness. You may think this an extreme illustration which I have quoted. I hope it is. Few have yet gone to the full extent of conclusions towards which others are drifting, and fewer still have the boldness to give such distinct utterance to the conclusions which their own minds have reached. But it is well that we should sometimes be able to mark the ultimate result of tendencies which many individuals regard as harmless or praiseworthy. The great objection to theories or measures which discard religion as their essential support is not that they offend religious persons,—the loss of whose concurrence should certainly be regretted as so much deduction of moral as well as numerical strength; but it is, I repeat, that they rest on an unsound foundation, and must crumble into dust. That the Christian world has failed to discharge its duty in respect to social evils is clear from the fact, that intemperance, war, slavery, licentiousness, dishonesty, still prevail. That the Church has misunderstood or neglected a large part of the work which its Divine Founder intended it should execute, it would be the part of great ignorance or great effrontery to deny. But calm, or even severe censure is very different from

indiscriminate abuse; and if, in our anxiety to prove how much below its duty the Christian Church has fallen, we overlook its actual services in the cause of suffering humanity — the good it has done, the recognition it has kept up of the Saviour's spirit,—we are guilty of injustice for which there can be no excuse, and in which there can be no possible advantage. Call Christian men, and Christian ministers to a more laborious and disinterested usefulness; but do not, because they but partially exemplify the principles of the religion by which they profess to be governed, do not therefore refuse to acknowledge the authority of the Master whose name they bear, nor attempt to build up a cause which is emphatically his by disowning its connexion with his Gospel or his Church.

Another mistake which has been seen in the history of the Temperance reform is too great reliance on artificial means, which, though useful as supports of the cause, ought not to be considered as its main strength. The buttresses of the building have been more regarded than its foundations. In some instances, indeed, the mere ornaments of the structure have seemed to have, in the eyes of those who were interested in its progress, more importance than the solidity of its materials. No one can question the justice of this remark, who remembers what use has been made of methods addressed wholly to the senses and the sympathies. Meetings in which the object appeared to be more to create amusement than to produce conviction, processions which had very little purpose except to gratify a love of excitement, and various factitious inducements to join the ranks of the reformed, should never have been trusted as the strong pillars of a great moral enterprise. They may have a value and a place, but they should be held as subsidiary, not as the principal agencies. They constitute the machinery of the movement, behind which lie its principles, and on these principles alone may we rest our hope of permanent success. Even the *pledge*, important instrument as it has been in the prosecution of this work, may be trusted too much. It is not enough that a man has been brought to sign the pledge. He is not therefore saved nor safe. He may relapse. Why should he not, — unless you have put some stronger curb on his appetite than his assent to an obligation, however solemn, given perhaps in a moment of transient compunction, or under the temporary influence of example? I confess that the efficacy of the pledge seems to me one of the most remarkable cir-

cumstances in the history of this cause, — a moral phenomenon; which probably has its explanation in the fact, that the individual feels himself *committed*, having taken that first step which often requires a greater effort than all which may follow, and in the yet more important consideration, that while under the influence of a sincere, though sudden and in itself often evanescent resolution, he has time to review his course of life in sober thought, and summon to his aid the principles of duty on which he may lean in his future path of amendment. It is on these principles, the principles of moral and religious duty, that he must place his dependence, and that we must place our dependence for him. He must be a reformed man at heart, if he mean to abide in the external purity which he has promised to observe. Is it not one of the faults of our age, that it relies too much on a superficial virtue, without keeping in mind the necessity of inward conviction, firm, enlightened and humble? It need not surprise us, that the moral enterprises of the day are affected by this error; but it does become us to rescue them, if possible, from the taint of this worst of heresies.

Among the obstacles which the Temperance Cause has been required to surmount in its successive stages, is undoubtedly the reluctance to appear in its behalf which has been shown by persons of wealth and influence. Its success, notwithstanding the little support it has received from them, is a proof that a good work may advance without their aid. And it is true, as every one knows, that the active friends of any philanthropic movement are seldom drawn from those classes whose social position best enables them to give a tone to opinion and manners. Yet it cannot admit of question, that their coöperation would be of essential advantage. How far it has been lost through a lack of good judgment on the part of those who have been prominent in this movement, it may not be easy, nor of much importance to determine. We must all acknowledge that zeal has sometimes outrun discretion. Nothing can be more unwise, scarce any thing more wrong, than to inflame the minds of one class in the community against another class whose sympathy is needed to the accomplishment of an end which all should regard with anxious interest. A speaker at a Temperance meeting who labors to implant or increase an unkind feeling in the poor towards the rich by holding them up to reproach or scorn, abuses a sacred opportunity and desecrates a holy cause. The

divisions in society are wide enough now, without seeking to make them yet greater hindrances to a community of feeling. Bridge over the chasms, fill them up if you can; but, for the sake of humanity and all its hopes, do not labor to make them still more effectual interruptions to that union of hearts and hands without which the Christian idea of society can never be realized.

Injudicious as may have been the course taken in some instances by the more strenuous friends of Temperance, a much greater mistake has been committed by those who, when they might have contributed largely to the spread of principles which would secure the moral regeneration of society, have from any motive withheld their countenance and declined laboring side by side with those who had dedicated themselves to this noble enterprise. From any motive, I say, — unless it were a conscientious disapproval of the design; which we should hesitate to impute to any one. If their tastes are offended by some of the forms of expression or action which have been adopted by others, that is as poor a reason for standing aloof, as would be given by one who, seeing others engaged in saving men in imminent peril of life, should refuse to assist them because they did not use just such methods or just such language as he might prefer. If they indulge a feeling of superiority which leads them to look on the work which these philanthropists have undertaken as hardly fit for their hands, why then shame on their contemptible arrogance, as anti-Christian as it is anti-republican in its character. If they apprehend a decrease of their wealth from a diminution of the sources whence it is drawn, then it is time to speak to them frankly and kindly. Addressing them in this spirit, I would "reason with them of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come." I would say to them, 'Friends, you mistake your interest as much as your duty. Money is not the end for which you should live, nor the means on which you should rely for your happiness in this world. A clear conscience is the best possession here, and the justification of such a hope for the future as the mines of Mexico and Peru could not give you. You cannot keep a clear conscience while you willingly amass property at the expense of others' characters. If your pecuniary gains are secured by their moral losses, you are carrying on a business which you have no right to carry on a moment longer. Close your counting-rooms, if against the entry of so much profit on your books your

own knowledge of what you are doing must compel you to admit might be written down — so much virtue destroyed, so much misery produced, so much ruin caused. Turn the key in the doors of the houses or the shops which you have leased for bad uses, and let them remain unoccupied till they fall to the ground, rather than become through them, no matter how indirectly, the authors of sin and all its consequences. Do you reply, that if you take this course you will become poor men? Be poor then, but be *honest* men, dealing uprightly with your neighbor and with the community. It is not honest dealing, to take from another in exchange for what you give him, not only the money which he agrees to pay you, but the integrity of soul, the fair reputation, and the moral influence which he has no right to part with. Do you say it will be taking the bread out of your children's mouths? Better that they should be deprived, even through your decision, of the means of earthly sustenance than that the spiritual life of others should be starved and poisoned. But there is not the least ground for these extravagant suppositions. You can get bread for yourselves and your children, and every thing that is necessary for their comfort or your own, without doing that which makes you pander to the vice of the city. Oh, ye traders and ye capitalists! ye men who sell, or who suffer to be sold where you might prevent it, that which, under the circumstances in which it is sold, you know must produce an unspeakable amount of evil! think, think of what you owe to yourselves. I approach you with no disposition to irritate or humble you. From sincere love I would set this matter before you in the light in which it ought to be viewed. You do not mean to injure the community; and yet what terrible wounds you inflict on its order, its peace, and its moral sentiment. You do not mean to harm yourselves; and yet what injustice you do to your own higher nature, to those feelings of generosity and compassion which you are smothering, those convictions of right which you are resisting and beclouding. You do not mean to lay up for yourselves a fearful retribution; yet how will you meet that judgment which a righteous God will pass on those to whom he has committed opportunities of usefulness which they have turned into occasions of most disastrous action on their fellow-men? Oh, consider your ways. "Deal courageously" with this matter, and doubt not "the Lord will be with the good."'

And ye who have stood at a distance, looking coldly, if you looked

at all, on this movement for the recovery of those who were the miserable slaves of appetite, and for the removal of the temptations through which they were betrayed, and multitudes more will be betrayed, to ruin! how can you justify yourselves in this insensibility? How can you be acquitted of blame, while you neither utter a word nor lift a finger to help on an undertaking that originates in such pure motives, and aims at such a glorious consummation? Your coöperation is needed. Your influence should be thrown on the right side. Now it is given against the reform of social abuses and the removal of the maladies which have affected not only the surface, but the very constitution of society; for your passive resistance has the effect of active opposition. It is interpreted by many as disapproval of the principles and measures involved in this enterprise. It discourages many who are desirous to do right. It emboldens many who are willing to do wrong. You incur a fearful responsibleness by the course which you pursue. Do not consent to bear such a responsibleness. For your own sake, cast it from you. For the sake of those whom you love, cast it from you. For the sake of your fellow-citizens, for the sake of coming generations who will feel the influence transmitted from the present time, cast it from you. Oh men of business, men of leisure, scholars, merchants, politicians, ye whose opinions are quoted, whose example is followed! say not that you will leave this cause in the hands of others who understand it better or can manage it better than you. No, they cannot understand it better than you, — you, the intelligent and the thoughtful. They cannot manage it so well without as with you, — you, whose words carry a weight of authority, and whose lives act upon the community with a force, which do not belong to those of other men. I plead with you in behalf of weak and failing humanity. I plead with you in the name of Christ and God. I beseech, I conjure you, nay, may I not require you as men of principle and of faith, to place yourselves among the friends of this Reform. Deny yourselves the indulgence that may be harmless to you, but becomes a stumbling-block in your brother's way. You cannot doubt the justice of the Apostle's declaration, — "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended or is made weak." Cannot you live up to his rule, — "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to

offend." I know you can. Be ye the brave and generous disciples of Jesus Christ.

If I have spoken at greater length than I intended on some of the circumstances which may have retarded the progress of the Temperance Cause or may now be turning it back from the success which at one time so many were ready to chronicle and admire, I have not wandered from the design of my discourse, which is to show how justly this cause solicits the support of all who can observe the state of the community or can appreciate the worth of moral influence. We have seen that it is too good a cause to be given up because its past history may have included some mistakes into which its friends have fallen, or because its present condition may offer discouragement to those who would labor to give it furtherance. On the contrary, the errors of the past should teach wisdom for the future, and the wants of the present should awaken a more earnest desire to put in operation the proper means of recovering lost ground, and of carrying the reform which has been commenced to its issue, in the establishment of sobriety on the basis of religious principle among all classes of the people.

In the execution of this service the young men of the country must bear a large part. On them in a great measure must devolve the care of this interest of society, or at least the performance of the tasks which it imposes, even if they should look to others of larger experience for counsel and direction. Two considerations should impel them to take hold of the work with alacrity and resolution. In the first place, they have the hopefulness and energy which are especially needed for such an enterprise. No moral reform can be carried through by those who have not entire confidence in its success, and are not ready to devote their full strength to its prosecution. Now it is the privilege of youth to think lightly of difficulties, and to bring to every undertaking a fresh vigor that compensates for the want of that experience which only years can give. The young are sanguine, and it is well they are so. They are fitted by this temper to encounter the early trials of life. Strong of arm, they are yet stronger in heart. They can command the will which is itself a pledge of success in any worthy, and often also in an unworthy enterprise. Life to them is full of interest and full of promise. They delight in conflicts which prove their courage and convince them of their own ability. They are therefore the very

agents needed for the active philanthropy of the time. Older men for counsel, but young men for action. The former, to suggest and restrain; the latter, to undertake and accomplish. Veteran wisdom and youthful manliness — let them go hand in hand through the evils of society, examining them all and displacing them with better arrangements and happier conditions of life. Let not the young scorn the advice of those who have seen more of the world, and studied the human heart longer through the offices of reflection. But let not the venerable or the mature refuse to take as companions in the achievements which they meditate, those whose blood will bound at the prospect of a service to be done for God and humanity, and whose flexile powers will enable them to meet circumstances as they shall arise with the most ready accommodation. The stripling David was a hero after he had received his anointing from the hand of the aged Samuel.

The habits of our country favor the connexion of youthful energies with enterprises of moral reform. It is often, and perhaps not unjustly lamented, that the young come forward so soon to take upon themselves the responsibilities of active life. They frequently assume these trusts at too early a period for their own good, and do their elders the injustice of thrusting them from the stage of action sooner than they ought to quit it. Still this is the habit of the times. The business of the community is conducted in great part by those who have just crossed the threshold of manhood. The honors of the country are laid on shoulders that have hardly learned to support the burthens of a weighty service. Our pulpits are filled by young men. The walks of the legal and medical profession are crowded with young men, who show themselves not less able than eager to enter upon the competition for honorable employment. Who then, according to the practice in every other department of life, who so fit to take up the philanthropic schemes of the day and give them a fair trial, as these same children of yesterday but champions of to-morrow? On whom may we with more propriety call for a quick and effectual response in behalf of a cause which appeals to every noble sensibility and every generous impulse, than on those whose hearts have not felt the weariness that comes from long struggle or the apathy that succeeds frequent disappointment?

While for such reasons as these we may confidently address our-

selves to the young in seeking their aid to sustain the operations of moral even more than of physical beneficence, there is in the other consideration which I proposed to offer a special reason why they should welcome an invitation of this kind. They are themselves placed in great peril of character. The energies, whose unworn force must make them so efficient in the labors of Christian usefulness, cause them to rush almost blindly into the excesses of indulgence. The temptations of vice which lie so thick about their steps entangle and overthrow them. Novelty gives a zest to that of which experience has not yet tasted the bitterness. Excitement is congenial to their age, and social pleasure has peculiar attractions for those whose spirits are an overflowing spring. Behold here the danger of youth, — immediate and extreme. How will you secure it against the ruin into which it is likely to plunge? Advice is only a Mentor whom the young Telemachus may forget amidst the caresses of the fair Calypso. Personal oversight is an office that will be sure to offend those for whose good it is intended. Virtuous companionship is an influence which may be overpowered by corrupt association. The only safeguard in which we may feel any confidence is the resolution which the young shall themselves form, intelligently and calmly, in view of their own exposure. Let them pledge their hearts, if not their hands to the cause of virtue, and they will become the guardians of their own purity. I can conceive of no surer way of preventing a young man from falling into bad courses, than to interest him in some great moral reform which shall strengthen his principles while it affords occupation to his thoughts and sympathies. The period from sixteen to twenty-two or three is the most perilous season of life. If it be left vacant to the seductions of sin, they will certainly take possession and do their accursed work. Thanks to him who can find employment for the pliant faculties and save them from a fate worse than idiocy.

If we would perceive the value of such engagements as connect the young with virtuous enterprises and virtuous people, we need only compare the spectacle which is witnessed in one who keeps his character free from the stains of moral pollution with what is seen in him who suffers himself to be drawn into habits of destructive self-indulgence. Behold the one and the other. See a young man who with powers that mark him as one of God's noblest creations, and with sensibilities that ally him to whatever is beau-

tiful and excellent in the universe, darkens his intellect, defiles his heart, forfeits self-respect and the confidence of those about him, becomes a lover of low pleasures and an associate of unworthy companions, brings sorrow and shame upon his parentage, is pitied, ridiculed, or despised as he falls under the notice of one or another class of observers, descends lower and lower in character, in estimation, in actual ability, till he is a wreck upon the sea of life, — that fair and gallant ship which as it were but yesterday left its port, promising to ride out every danger and largely reward those who had spent their best exertions in preparing it for the voyage to which it was destined, a wreck, the wonder and grief of those who see it! What has done all this? What has ruined that youth, despoiled him of his beauty and his strength, and cast him to the mercy of the winds and waves without the power of resistance or self-control? Drink, strong drink. He tasted the wine; he tasted that for which the wine inflamed his appetite; he drank first a little, then much, then deep and often; he became a drunkard. A drunkard! What ignominy would any one of you deem it, to have that name branded on his forehead, — a name which includes almost every base quality and suggests every loathsome association. Will you then write it with your own hand all over your person, that your countenance, your speech, your gait, your manners, all shall proclaim you a drunkard? No, no. In your sober moments you will say 'No, death sooner than such infamy.' Let there be, then, no other than sober moments in your life, that you may not in your rashness or your weakness bring on yourself the fate you so earnestly deprecate.

Look now on the other spectacle, — a young man who holds fast his integrity, preserves his purity, maintains a good conversation and a fair name in the world, is loved, respected, trusted, acquires influence, seizes on success, or if unsuccessful in his plans causes disappointment to reflect his worth more brightly upon others, carries in his bosom a quiet conscience, comprehends the purpose of life and secures its highest ends, makes himself useful and valuable to the community, and, as he passes into a ripe manhood, is welcomed by those who are glad to receive him as their associate in sustaining the burdens of public duty and guiding the affairs of the state. Who would not desire that such a history might be written of him in the observation of the community to which he belongs? It may be the history of every young man. It will be

the history of every one who obeys principle rather than appetite, and prefers the approbation of his own soul to the seduction of evil example and bad counsel.

Young men who hear me! be ye then encouraged in the purpose which you entertain of preserving yourselves and rescuing others from the dominion of a habit which is more despotic than an autocrat's will and more cruel than a Nero's temper. What if your number be small? We regret that your list of members includes so few names. But it is more honorable to belong to the well-principled few than to the thoughtless or foolish many. Better to be alone in one's virtue than to follow a multitude to do evil. Be not disheartened, but prosecute the work which you have undertaken. "Deal courageously" with the evil against which you have arrayed yourselves, and "the Lord shall be with the good." The good — seek to deserve that title before any other that can be given you. Earn a right to that name, and then take the promise to yourselves. Take the animation and hope which it conveys as what you may lay up in your hearts. The Lord shall be with you. And if He be with you, who shall ever inscribe failure upon your enterprise? If He be with you, face sin with its hundred arms, face vice in its Protean forms, face the devil, and he will flee from you. The mightiest enterprises of humanity need only this guarantee of their success. Evil must yield to the good, when the Lord leads them on.

Young men of Boston! will you not respond to the call which is made upon you to join the band that is organized to carry on this noble work of reform? A worthier cause invites you to enlist in its service than has drawn many a young man from his home to a distant warfare. A worthier cause, did I say? I did wrong so to compare them, for there is no worth in the one, there is all worth in the other. The one is a cause on which the Christian and the philanthropist can bestow no benediction, the other is a cause on which the angels may shower their approving sympathies. The one arms its servants with the weapons of death, the other commits to its ministers the means of life. The one would "conquer a peace," the other would bestow a victory. Will you hesitate to join heart and hand with those whose object it is to save their fellow-men, to befriend the weak, to encourage the well-disposed, to surround the community with the protection of a

healthful atmosphere in place of one impregnated with the contagion of moral disease? Think of the good you may do, the glory you may win — a true glory, worth the labor and sacrifice it will cost a thousand times over,— the satisfaction you will have in the remembrance of your efforts, the delight you must feel in witnessing the recovery of the fallen and the improvement of society; think of the power which is in your hands, and the responsibleness which lies at your door; think of these things, and act as your own judgment and conscience and best feelings will prompt you to act. I fear not the result. I know what it will be.

Young men of America! the future history of this republic must be determined by you. Shall it be a history of sin and shame, or of intellectual and moral advancement? Shall it be such as may make future generations glad, or such as shall cause them to esteem their descent no fit occasion of rejoicing? Shall our free institutions be perpetuated, and a still more effective element of freedom be incorporated with them? Shall a virtuous and prosperous people spread themselves over these States, till our Western prairies shall be covered with a moral luxuriance of which the physical beauty it shall have displaced will be a poor type, and our Northern breezes shall waft to our distant brethren the songs of a hardy and happy people? Or shall effeminacy, discord and ruin be the titles under which the historian shall describe the decay of our national grandeur, and the overthrow of our fondest hopes? The answer to these questions rests more with you than with any other portion of the people. May I not say, it rests wholly with you? For if you shall agree as one man on the answer, that answer shall abide. And in framing that reply nothing will bear more directly on its character, than the decision you shall adopt respecting the part you may take in that great moral reform which has this evening occupied our attention. A people among whom intemperance prevails can never accomplish an honorable destiny. Freedom is but an empty word where virtue is lost. Hear ye then the appeal which is made to you in the name of your country and all that you love within its borders. Patriotism calls to you from its fields of toil and its altars of sacrifice. Religion calls to you from its throne of power and its cross of suffering. Humanity waits for your decision. The hope of the world looks imploringly to you. Young men! do your duty. Deal courageously, and the Lord be with the good.